Level 2 Elementary/Lower-intermediate CEF: A2 KET



Richard MacAndrew A Little Trouble in Amsterdam

Aims_

- To make students interested in the book.
- To allow students to gain some experience in dialogue writing.
- To give students the opportunity to take part in some role-play activities.

NB You may find that many of the activities described below can be exploited better in your students' own language or mother tongue, if you speak it. The mother tongue, if used carefully as a resource, can facilitate your students' progress in English and help them to understand the context of the story, thus preparing them to understand it better when they read it.

Pre-reading Activities _

- Ask students to look at Illustration 1 (the cover of the book). Do not tell them the book title at this stage. Ask students What do you think of when you look at the book cover? Write their ideas on the board. Possible answers: What they see, the mood of the picture, where it might be.
 - Now ask What type of story do you think it is? If necessary, help students by eliciting the different types of genre and writing them on the board. Tell students that the title of the book is *A Little Trouble in Amsterdam.* Then ask *Does this change* your ideas about what type of story it is? If they haven't guessed already, tell them the book is an adventure story. Then ask What do you think will probably happen in an adventure story?
- **2** Working in pairs, ask students to compile a list of questions they could ask a stranger to find out about them when they first met (e.g. How old are you? Where do you live?) Students now read Extract 1 and look at Illustration 2. Still working in their pairs, students 'ask' Andy and Mary their questions from the list (plus any new ones they may have now) and write down their imagined answers.
- Tell students to read Extract 2 (a news report on TV). Briefly go over what the news report is about. Students now imagine museum staff discovering the robbery and phoning the police. Divide the students

- into two groups. Ask Group A to work alone to write a few lines of dialogue between two museum staff who discover the robbery. Ask Group B to work alone to write the dialogue of a phone conversation where the museum staff tells the police about the robberv.
- Now put students into pairs so that each pair has a member of Group A and a member of Group B. Pairs then read out their work to make a complete scene - i.e. they start with the robbery discovery and move on to the telephone conversation.
- Ask for volunteers to be on a panel of museum staff and police at a press conference. The rest of the class are journalists hungry to get the facts about the robbery so they can write newspaper stories about it. Give the panel and the journalists five minutes to prepare – the panel to think about what questions they might be asked and their possible answers to these questions, and the journalists to think of questions to ask. Now hold your 'press conference'.
- Ask students to look at Illustration 3. Working in pairs, they discuss the picture and make notes. Ask What is happening? What can you notice? Feedback with the whole class and contrast answers against the previous activity.
- Ask students to write a caption for Illustration 3. Ask them to decide in advance what mood they want their caption to have (e.g. exciting, frightening, mysterious or funny). If necessary, provide the translation of these words in their mother tongue. Share these with the whole class. Decide with them which mood works best with the picture.
- Remind students that the stolen painting is by Rembrandt. Working in pairs, ask students to write down the names of as many artists as they can think of. After three minutes, count up to find the winners and share their list with the whole class.
- Ask students to read Extract 3, which is written in reported speech instead of direct speech. Discuss the difference between them.
 - **Answer:** Reported speech tells us what was said, but without using the exact words. Direct speech gives us the exact words.

Students now change the extract into direct speech – i.e. they write a dialogue with Kompier asking her questions and Mary and Andy answering them. Ask students *Which do you prefer? Why do you think writers sometimes use reported speech?*

Suggested answers: It can give information quickly. It avoids repetition.

9 Ask students to look at Illustration 4. Elicit what they think is happening here.

Answer: Mary and Andy have been locked in a room by some bad guys. Ask *How are Mary and Andy feeling? What do you think they will do next?*

Post-reading Activities _

- 1 Working in pairs, students 'storyboard' the book, putting the main events in the correct order. Ask What do you think of the ending of the story? Can you think of a better ending?
- **2** Ask students to think about what appealed to them most about the book and make notes. They share these thoughts with a partner or the whole class.
- 3 Ask students to think of a new title, cover idea and blurb for the book. These should convey or highlight what they liked about the book. Students share their ideas with the whole class. Hold a vote to find the most popular book. (NB Students are not allowed to vote for their own book.)
- **4** Ask for a volunteer to act as Peter van Noordwyk. The rest of the class are journalists who ask Peter questions. Act it out.

Extract 1

'Come on, Mary!' said Andy. 'Look at the time. We've got to get back to the hotel. Mum said eight o'clock at the latest. It's almost that now.'

'Just a minute,' said Mary. 'I want to see what's in here. Quick!' She took her brother by the hand and pulled him through the half-open front door of a house.

'Hey ...' began Andy. 'Mary what are you doing?' We can't go in here. This is someone's house.'

Sometimes he couldn't believe the things his sister did. She was always getting them into trouble – and he usually had to get them out.

Extract 2 _

'In a robbery yesterday afternoon at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, robbers escaped with a painting by Rembrandt. The painting cost the museum £23 million four years ago and is an excellent and unusual example of Rembrandt's early work. Police do not yet know how the robbers got in and out of the museum and they are asking the public to help with any information.'

Extract 3 _

Kompier wanted to know everything about the night before. She asked about the men. What did they look like? What were they wearing? What language did they speak? She asked about the boat. Was it long or short? What colour was it? Did they see the name of the boat? She asked about what the men were carrying. What did it look like? How big was it? Why did they think it was a painting?

Illustration 1.

My notes _____

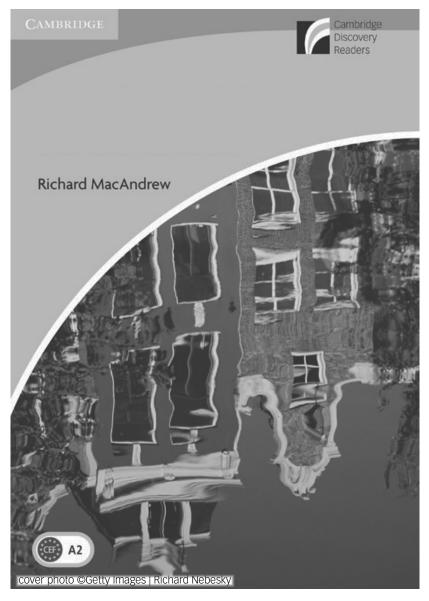


Illustration 2



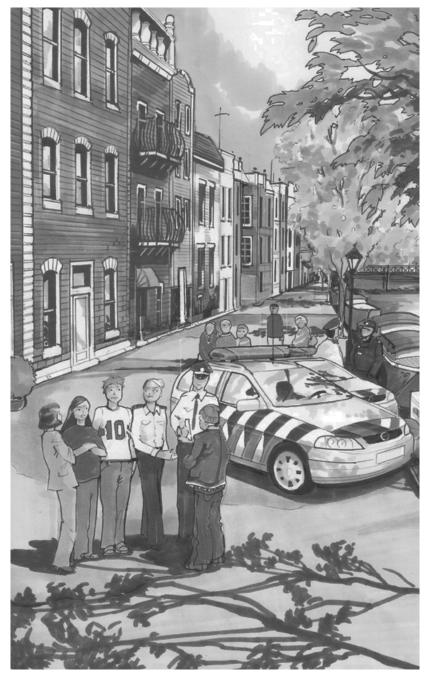


Illustration 4.

My notes _____

